



Virginia

Diligent Recruitment and Retention Plan

2019-2024

Introduction

Virginia's social services system is state supervised and locally administered, with the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) providing direction, oversight, and support to the 120 local departments of social services (LDSS) which serve the children and families of Virginia. VDSS partners with the LDSS, and faith-based and non-profit organizations, to support the continuum of placement services and provide resources to temporarily meet the needs of children while their parents work to address the issues which brought the children into care. LDSS and Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA) are responsible for approving foster and adoptive families based on specific Code requirements and regulatory standards. Virginia's resource families are dually approved to foster and when appropriate, adopt, and the approval process is a mutual endeavor between the LDSS or LCPA and the family requesting approval.

The Virginia Children's Services Practice Model

The Virginia Children's Services System Practice Model sets forth a vision for the services that are delivered by all child serving agencies across the Commonwealth, especially the Departments of Social Services, Juvenile Justice, Education, Behavioral Health and Developmental Services and the Office of Children's Services. The practice model is central to all decision-making, present in all meetings, and in every interaction that takes place with a child or family.

- We believe that all children and communities deserve to be safe.
- We believe in family, child, and youth-driven practice.
- We believe that children do best when raised in families.
- We believe that all children and youth need and deserve a permanent family.
- We believe in partnering with others to support child and family success in a system that is family focused, child-centered, and community-based.
- We believe that how we do our work is as important as the work we do.

Virginia's practice model aligns with VDSS' commitment to improve foster care practices in Virginia and its mission to protect children and promote healthy families. By strengthening partnerships with public and private child welfare agencies and key stakeholders VDSS will promote a kin first culture that prioritizes placement of children in family based settings.

Alignment

As part of VDSS' goal to strengthen Virginia's Child Welfare system there have been ongoing, statewide efforts to provide local departments with supports and tools needed to increase the pool of available foster homes. The Child and Family Services Review conducted in 2017, the subsequent Program Improvement Plan and most recently the

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee completed in 2019, have provided clear direction for Virginia to implement a Diligent Recruitment Strategic Plan.

CFSR/PIP

Conducted between April 1, 2017 and June 1 2017 the third round of the Virginia's Child and Family Services Review (CFSR), indicated that although progress was made towards improving Virginia's child welfare system, there remain significant areas in need of improvement. VDSS's CFSR Program Improvement Plan (PIP) identified areas of concern to include:

- Foster families who can provide for the identified needs of the child;
- Placing children with relatives while in Foster Care;
- Moving children from Foster Care to permanency; and,
- Achieving permanency in a timely manner.

Review of placement data for the cohort of children who entered and exited care from July 2011 through March 2017, showed 40% of children with one placement, 21% of children with two placements, and 20% of children with three or more placements. The data further showed that the number of placements went up as the child's length of time in care increased; although this aggregate number would also include cases where placement changes were related to the goal.

A significant need, as identified by LDSS staff, are foster home placements for teenagers (approximately 38% of the foster care population) with foster parents who are trained and have supports necessary to meet the needs of older children (e.g., intensive case management, specialized services for children, etc.). LDSS supervisors and workers participated in Town Halls across the state and also reported that they struggle to find appropriate foster home placements for sibling groups, African American children and youth (approximately 30% of the foster care population). It was further reported that treatment foster care homes are no better equipped to support children who exhibit difficult behaviors than are locally approved foster homes resulting in many children being placed in congregate care facilities.

The lack of data related to the number of locally approved homes and treatment foster care homes along with the lack of information related to the age and needs of children in foster care is a significant barrier to ensuring that all children who enter foster care in Virginia live in a family. Virginia also does not have aggregated racial or ethnic demographic data for resource families. As a result, the state is unable to ensure that the pool of resource families reflects the racial and ethnic diversity of the children needing foster and adoptive homes.

Strategy 3.2 in the PIP specifically addresses these issues through a comprehensive Diligent Recruitment Strategic Plan developed by a workgroup made up of state/regional staff, LDSS staff, stakeholders and foster parents. This plan is intended to address data

collection to allow Virginia to determine the number and types of foster and adoptive homes needed as it relates to the foster care population.

Adoption Call to Action

The Division of Families Services Practice Program areas: Foster Care, Adoption and the Resource Family programs aligned division outcomes and resources along with Virginia's five year Child and Family Services Strategic Plan, Child and Family Services Review (Program Improvement Plan), and Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Strategic Plan to develop Virginia's plan for the Adoption Call to Action Initiative.

Regional Permanency Practice Consultants conducted a review of the cases of all children placed in congregate care and identified 550 children who were placed in congregate care not due to medical necessity. Of those children Virginia has identified 33 children under the age of 12, for who termination of parental rights has been obtained and have the goal of adoption.

Regional Permanency Practice Consultants will review each case with the local department to determine what action the department is taking to transition the child from congregate care and into a permanent family placement. Following the review, practice consultants will develop a plan of intervention with the local department. If an adoptive family has not been identified, Regional Resource Family Practice Consultants will assist the local department in developing a child specific diligent recruitment strategy that prioritizes exploring kinship foster parent options if appropriate. Regional Adoption Negotiators will lead the initiative and convene monthly meetings with their regional peers to review progress within each case. When an adoptive family is identified, the Adoption Negotiator will utilize the rapid response review tool to guide the case through the adoption process.

Through this initiative, Virginia anticipates that by December 1, 2020, 12 of the 33 children will have an adoptive family identified with visitation ongoing and the family actively participating in the child's treatment.

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC)

In December 2018, JLARC submitted the report ["Improving Virginia's Foster Care System"](#), which highlighted the need for the state to invest in a resource family program with the goal of ensuring that every child in foster care lives in a family. In particular, the report identified a lack of a strategic plan for recruiting foster families and a lack of a statewide inventory of foster families as failings in the current system. The report made the following recommendations for the General Assembly to consider for foster family recruitment and retention efforts:

RECOMMENDATION 4 The Virginia Board of Social Services should promulgate regulations to require staff of local departments of social services to at least annually conduct a search for relatives of every child who (i) is not placed with relatives and (ii) has no clear permanent placement options. The amended regulation should further require that relative searches be conducted when a child's placement changes, if such a search has not been conducted in the 90 days prior.

RECOMMENDATION 6 The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) should issue clear guidance that presents the options available to local departments of social services to facilitate the approval of relatives to serve as foster parents. Guidance materials should be issued to all local departments and regional VDSS staff.

RECOMMENDATION 7 The General Assembly may wish to consider amending Title 63.2, Chapter 9 of the Code of Virginia to require every local department of social services to provide semiannually to the Virginia Department of Social Services a list of all licensed foster families who reside in their locality. The list should, at a minimum, include foster families' contact information, preferences regarding the age, number, and needs of children each family would consider fostering, key demographic information for each family, the number and ages of children each family is currently fostering, the total number of other children in each family's home and their ages, and biological relationships (if any) between each family and the children they are fostering.

RECOMMENDATION 8 The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Social Services to develop and maintain a statewide strategic plan for recruiting and retaining foster families.

RECOMMENDATION 9 The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act to establish six positions—five regional staff and one at the central office—at the Virginia Department of Social Services responsible for implementing the statewide strategic plan for recruiting and retaining foster families and supporting local recruitment and retention efforts.

RECOMMENDATION 11 The General Assembly may wish to consider including language in the Appropriation Act directing the Virginia Department of Social Services to (i) conduct an immediate review of the circumstances of every child in foster care currently in congregate care, to identify children who do not have a clinical need to be in congregate care; (ii) communicate its findings to each local department of social services; (iii) direct the local departments to make concerted efforts to identify appropriate family-based placements for these children; and (iv) direct the local departments to move identified children to an appropriate family-based placement, if feasible.

Virginia's Response to JLARC Recommendations

Based on JLARC's recommendations a Diligent Recruitment Workgroup comprised of supervisors from 5 local departments along with representatives from the Capacity Building Center for Sates, Newfound Families, and Virginia's Kids Belong, the

Governor's Office/VA Fosters, VDSS Regional Practice Consultants and Home Office staff was organized. The workgroup was convened to begin developing a data-driven strategic recruitment and retention plan that prioritizes placement of children who enter foster care with relatives whenever possible. Prior to the release of the JLARC report, VDSS had begun data clean-up of its current Online Automated Services Information System (OASIS) to address the lack of accurate Resource Family data. These efforts will continue as VDSS moves toward developing a more reliable data base to track key demographic information of all foster families statewide.

The 2019, General Assembly Budget Appropriation Act allocated funding to hire a Resource Family Program Manager along with five Regional Consultants. Virginia has since filled these positions and now has a Program Manager and a dedicated staff member in each of its five regions to support local recruitment and retention efforts.

The Office of the Governor has established the Virginia Fosters initiative with the goal of approving 1000 new foster families. A Director has been hired and has actively participated in the Diligent Recruitment workgroup. Virginia Fosters will partner with LDSS to develop recruitment plans in order to expand the pool of foster families statewide.

FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE MULTI-ETHNIC PLACEMENT ACT (MEPA)

Virginia is required to comply with federal laws that promote the best interests of children by ensuring that they have permanent, safe, stable, and loving homes that will meet their individual needs, without regard to the child's or the prospective parent's race, color, or national origin. The Multi-Ethnic Placement Act (MEPA) of 1994, as amended, prohibits the delay or denial of any adoption or placement in foster care due to race, color, or national origin of the child or the foster or adoptive parents. It also requires States to provide for diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children for whom homes are needed. To meet MEPA's diligent efforts requirements, States must have a comprehensive plan detailed that includes:

1. A description of the characteristics of waiting children;
2. Specific strategies to reach all parts of the community;
3. Diverse methods of disseminating both general and child-specific information;
4. Strategies for assuring that all prospective parents have access to the home study process, including location and hours of services that facilitate access by all members of the community;
5. Strategies for training staff to work with diverse cultural, racial, and economic communities;
6. Strategies for dealing with linguistic barriers;
7. Non-discriminatory fee structures; and
8. Procedures ensuring a timely search for prospective parents awaiting a child, including the use of exchanges and other interagency efforts, provided that such

procedures ensure that the placement of a child in an appropriate household is not delayed by the search for a same race or ethnic placement.

Plan Development Process

VDSS' Child and Family Services Review (CFSR) Program Improvement Plan (PIP) meetings began in 2018. Initially these meetings consisted of the VDSS Executive State Leadership team. The Executive team reviewed past and current initiatives to ensure that recommendations and requirements outlined in the CFSR/PIP, CFSP, JLARC and Family First Act, would align with the Diligent Recruitment Plan (DR). During the progression of these meetings internal and external stakeholders were invited to join the PIP meetings to gather their input in developing the statewide strategic DR plan. A DR Advisory Committee was convened which included state and local child welfare staff and private providers. Through these collective efforts of state and local child welfare staff, key stakeholders, and private providers, focus groups were convened to assist in the development of a strategic diligent recruitment and retention plan. Additional input and recommendations were gathered from the Youth Advisory Board; which consists of current and former youth in foster care, to gain a better understanding of the types of families needed. The DR Advisory Committee led to the development of a smaller DR workgroup that was charged with developing a DR five (5) year Strategic Plan. This workgroup in collaboration with the Capacity Building Center for States (CFS) continued working on the development and implementation of the DR plan.

By utilizing a root cause analysis, specific barriers to recruitment of foster families were identified and addressed through the development of goals and strategies. A diligent recruitment plan was created that will support a significant increase in kinship placements while also supporting recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive families.

Problem Statement and Theory of change

Problem: Children/youth in foster care in VA are not always placed in a family-based setting/placement that is able to meet their needs- resulting in siblings being separated and older youth residing in congregate care settings. Specifically, AA children and youth and children/youth with special needs are not being placed in families that can meet their needs.

Diligent Recruitment Strategic Plan Theory of Change

VDSS/LDSS will systemically utilize a structured diligent recruitment and retention process (policy and guidelines), apply training skills and provide specialized foster parent supports so workers have the ability to assess, train and make appropriate placements

And

Improve state-wide capacity to collect data in order for staff to use data-driven decision-making pertaining to placement

So that

VDSS/LDSS use the skills, tools, process, data to identify kinship and foster families that can meet the needs of sibling groups, minority children, older youth, and children/youth with specific needs and the types of families needed in the geographic areas where they are most needed

So that

Recruitment efforts can be targeted to increase the availability of the right families where they are needed with kinship placement being the first priority

And

Workers will immediately assess and quickly approve kinship and foster families

So that

Children are placed with the right families in the right geographic areas who can meet the child/youth's specific needs

And

Families receive specific supports to meet the needs of the children in their homes.

Goal: All children/youth in foster care in Virginia (especially AA, older youth, and children with special needs) will live in a kinship or foster family that will meet their needs, and children/youth will benefit from their connections to their siblings, families, and communities.

Characteristics of Children in Care

The tables below provide demographic data and characteristics of the children placed in Virginia's foster care system. As of 10/1/2019, there were 5,517 children in foster care. The largest racial makeup of children in foster care are primarily Black or White and are between the ages of one and five. The average length of time that a child spends in foster care is approximately eighteen months, but for children waiting for adoption the average amount of time in care is over 30 months. The data also highlights the need to increase the number of approved relative and kinship homes.

Review of statewide data will assist VDSS to enhance ongoing efforts to increase the approval of relatives but also support collaboration with local agencies to ensure that the types of families recruited reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the children currently in care especially those children waiting for adoptive homes. By using this data the goal would be to increase targeted recruitment efforts and identify gaps in current recruitment practices.

Table 1

Race of children in Foster Care as of 10/01/2019

| Black | Percent Black | White | Percent White | Am Indian Alaskan Native | Percent Am Indian Alaskan Native | Asian | Percent Asian | Hawaiian Pacific Islander | Percent Hawaiian Pacific Isl | Multi-race | Percent Multi-race | Hispanic | Percent Hispanic |
|-------|---------------|-------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|-------|---------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|
| 1642 | 29.8% | 3273 | 59.3% | 2 | 0.0% | 36 | 0.7% | 6 | 0.1% | 473 | 8.6% | 611 | 11.1% |

Table 2

Age of children in Foster Care as of 10/01/2019

| Under 1 | Percent Under 1 | Age 1 thru 5 | Percent 1 thru 5 | Age 6 thru 9 | Percent 6 - 9 | Age 10 thru 12 | Percent 10 - 12 | Age 13 thru 15 | Percent 13 - 15 | Age 16 thru 18 | Percent 16 - 18 | Age 19 & Over | Percent 19+ |
|---------|-----------------|--------------|------------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|-------------|
| 274 | 5.0% | 1279 | 23.2% | 841 | 15.2% | 634 | 11.5% | 843 | 15.3% | 1166 | 21.1% | 480 | 8.7% |

Table 3

Average Time in Care (in months) as of 10/01/2019

| Average Time in Care (in Months) | Return Home | Placement with Relatives | Adoption | Permanent FC | Independent Living | Another Planned Perm Living Arrangement | Continued FC | To Be Determined | Guardian-ship | No Goal Entered |
|----------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------------|---|--------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 18.73 | 10.71 | 16.90 | 30.58 | 26.30 | 18.52 | 26.73 | 0.00 | 6.75 | 0.00 | 4.13 |

Goal 1: Increase the pool of kinship and foster families statewide

| Objective | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|---|---|------------|--------------|---|-------------------------|--|
| A. Prioritize data cleanup, collection and utilization | <p>i. Establish data input process and procedures</p> <p>ii. OASIS cleanup of resource family records to accurately reflect the number and location of locally approved homes</p> <p>iii. Use of COMPASS to maintain data that reflects the geographic location and ethnic and cultural information of both locally approved foster families as well as Treatment Foster Care homes approved by LCPAs</p> | JLARC 7 | January 2024 | Data dashboard in place with current kids in care and available homes | Statewide Participation | <p>Work collaboratively with COMPASS team to develop protocol for collection of required data</p> <p>Implement a statewide SOP for entering Resource Family data</p> |

Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

| Objective | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|--|---|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | | | | | | |
| B. Increase the frequency of kinship approvals statewide | <p>i. VDSS will establish clear guidance for LDSS to facilitate approval of relatives at time of removal or when identified</p> <p>ii. LDSS will utilize guidance to increase the frequency of relative approvals</p> | JLARC 6 JLARC 4 PIP 3.2 | <p>July 2021</p> <p>January 2024</p> | <p>VDSS will revise guidance to provide clear direction related to child specific approval of kin</p> <p>LDSS will develop and utilize a process of approving kinship families as outlined in guidance</p> | <p>100% of PIP agencies will develop a process to initiate child specific approval of kin</p> <p>Statewide Implementation</p> | <p>Resource family unit along with PIP agencies will review and suggest changes to home approval guidance that promote and clarify the process of approval of kin</p> <p>Regional Practice consultants will assist LDSS in understanding guidance and developing and implementing a process for approving kinship families</p> |
| C. Recruit foster families in the right geographical areas that can meet the specific needs of children and youth | i. VDSS will provide data to LDSS to include demographic characteristics of kids in care to include geo-mapping of removal homes | JLARC 11 | January 2021 | LDSS will utilize data specific to the needs of their children and families to implement recruitment plans | 25% of agencies will develop data driven recruitment plans that reflect the needs of their children and families | Resource family practice consultants will assist LDSS in utilizing data to develop annual recruitment plans. |

Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

| Objective | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|-----------|---|------------|--------------|--|--|--|
| | ii. LDSS will annually develop data driven recruitment plans that are targeted to the needs of their children and the location of the children's homes. | | January 2023 | | 75% of agencies will develop data driven recruitment plans that reflect the needs of their children and families | |
| | | | January 2024 | | Statewide implementation | |
| | ii. LDSS will develop child specific recruitment plans for children placed in congregate care, children with special needs and sibling groups. | | January 2021 | LDSS will target recruitment of families who can meet the specific needs of children identified as hard to place | 25% of agencies will develop strategies to identify families for all children who enter foster care | Resource family practice consultants will assist LDSS in case mining to identify relatives and fictive kin who may be considered for placement. Locally approved families and Treatment Foster Care families will be explored in order to identify families willing to accept placement and work with the local department to meet the specific needs of children. |
| | | | January 2023 | | 75% of agencies will develop strategies to identify families for all children | |

Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

| Objective | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|-----------|--|------------|--------------|---|--|--|
| | | | January 2024 | | who enter foster care. Statewide Implementation | |
| | iii. VDSS will provide Virginia's Kids Belong and Virginia Fosters with demographic data of children in foster care. | | April 2020 | Virginia's Kids Belong and Virginia Fosters will identify LDSS that it will assist in developing a data driven recruitment plan | Virginia's Kids Belong and Virginia Fosters will develop recruitment strategies to find homes that reflect the needs of the LDSS | Resource Family Program manager will meet at least monthly with Virginia's Kids Belong and Virginia Fosters staff to provide data and assist in the development of recruitment strategies and plans. |
| | iv. VDSS will include Licensed Child Placing Agencies (LCPA) in Regional recruitment plans to focus their efforts on identifying families for children with special needs including intense behavioral | | April 2021 | LCPAs will be included in Regional Recruitment planning | Increased participation and involvement of LCPAs in state sponsored meetings | Resource Family unit will include LCPAs in each region in developing recruitment plans |

Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

| Objective | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|--|--|------------|--------------|--|--|---|
| | challenges and children in congregate care. | | | | | |
| D. Increase the frequency at which pre-service training is offered to prospective foster families | i. Consortium for Resource, Adoptive, and Foster Family Training (CRAFTT) will work with Practice Consultants in each Region to develop a consistent and ongoing preservice training schedule | | January 2021 | A calendar outlining an annual pre-service training schedule will be published on the VDSS website | Each region will develop a pre-service training schedule that families seeking approval can access | Practice Consultants will work with CRAFTT and PIP agencies to develop training schedules that include at least two pre-service trainings annually |
| E. A Diligent Recruitment Advisory Committee will be developed to review guidance and policy related to resource families | VDSS will establish a Diligent Recruitment Advisory Committee | | August 2020 | Quarterly meetings will rotate between regions to ensure that LDSS, kinship and foster families in each region have the opportunity to offer input | Advisory Committee meetings will be scheduled in each region | Resource Family practice consultants will identify kinship caregivers along with foster parents in each region who will serve on the Advisory Committee |

Goal 2: Support, develop and retain foster families who are equipped to meet the needs of Virginia's children

| Objectives | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|---|---|------------|--------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| A. Utilize data to understand how to develop support and retention plans | i. Utilize data to identify the number of kinship and resource families statewide and where they are located | JLARC 8 | January 2024 | State and regional data dashboard in place and utilized to understand where families are located | Statewide Implementation | Resource family unit will utilize regional roundtables to assist LDSS in developing plans of support and retention for foster families in their region. |
| B. Develop the ability of approved families to serve older youth and children with special needs | i. VDSS will utilize CRAFFT to provide training necessary for kinship families and foster families to meet the needs of children with special needs, and children with significant | | July 2020 | LDSS will utilize data and case reviews at least annually, to identify children placed in congregate care and understand the barriers to | Statewide Implementation | Resource family practice consultants will work with PIP agencies and CRAFFT coordinators to develop in service training plans specific to the needs of children placed in congregate care |

Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

| Objectives | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|--|---|------------|--------------|--|--|--|
| | behavioral challenges | | | placement in a family | | |
| | ii. A Tradition of Caring will be utilized during pre-service training of all kinship foster parents | | April 2022 | CRAFFT coordinators will train LDSS staff to implement A Tradition of Caring | Each region will have LDSS staff trained to provide A Tradition of Caring training to kin and fictive kin caregivers | Practice consultants will help LDSS identify staff who may administer A Tradition of Caring when necessary. CRAFFT coordinators will also provide A Tradition of Caring training upon request from LDSS. |
| | iii. VDSS and LDSS will partner with Licensed Child Placing Agencies to develop a kinship support model that offers LDSS the opportunity to purchase wrap around services | | January 2024 | LCPAs will develop wrap around supports for kinship foster parents as needs are identified by LDSS | An LCPA within each region will be identified to provide support services to kinship foster parents | Resource Family unit along with DR Advisory Committee and LCPAs will identify best practice models with focus on support of kin |
| Prioritize retention of foster families using state and regional retention plans | iv. Virginia's Kids Belong in partnership with VDSS will develop regional foster parent support, | | January 2022 | Virginia's Kids Belong will develop community partnerships within each | Statewide implementation of support and retention plan | Resource Family unit will meet monthly with Virginia's Kids Belong staff to provide necessary data to develop comprehensive plans of support and retention of families |

| Objectives | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|------------|---|------------|------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| | respite and retention plans | | | region focused on providing support to kinship and foster families | | |
| | v. LDSS will utilize the Foster Parent Bill of Rights to establish a standard of practice and a dispute resolution process to reduce foster parent turnover | | July 2021 | Foster care and resource family staff will utilize Foster Parent Bill of Rights to increase the capacity to partner with and respond appropriately to foster parent's concerns in order to reduce foster parent turnover | Statewide Implementation | Resource family consultants will provide practice assistance to LDSS in developing a dispute resolution process that prioritizes retention of foster families |

Goal 3: Invest in a well trained workforce that is knowledgeable and skilled to support kinship and foster family recruitment, use and retention.

Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

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Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

| Objectives | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|---|---|------------|--------------|--|--------------------------|---|
| placing children in families and with relatives whenever possible | | | | improve understanding of the value of kinship care | | with relatives whenever possible to be available in the Knowledge Center |
| | ii. VDSS will provide LDSS staff with training to focus on finding and engaging relatives | | January 2022 | All LDSS CPS and Foster Care supervisors and staff will complete training to enhance their ability to locate and engage relatives when children enter foster care | Statewide implementation | Resource Family Unit will develop a curriculum designed to enhance the ability of LDSS staff to identify and engage both Maternal and Paternal relatives to be available in the Knowledge Center |
| | iii. VDSS will provide LDSS staff with training to focus on supporting kinship families | | January 2022 | All LDSS CPS and Foster Care supervisors and staff will complete training to improve understanding of how to effectively support relative and fictive kin caregivers | Statewide implementation | Resource Family Unit will develop a curriculum designed to improve LDSS staff's understanding of how to meet the needs of relative and fictive kin caregivers to be available in the Knowledge Center |

Virginia's Diligent Recruitment Plan

| Objectives | Activities | Alignments | Timeframes | Benchmarks | Measures of progress | Implementation supports – staff training needs, technical assistance, evaluation processes, etc. |
|--|---|------------|--------------|---|--|--|
| | iv. VDSS will develop and distribute tools to assist LDSS in developing processes of assessment and approval of kin | | January 2022 | LDSS will utilize tools to improve their ability to assess, approve and support Kinship Families | Statewide implementation | The Resource Family Unit will facilitate quarterly Regional Roundtables to distribute and provide practice assistance related to the utilization of tools |
| | v. VDSS will develop a Mutual Family Assessment training to be completed by anyone writing a home study | | January 2022 | LDSS and LCPA staff whose responsibilities include writing home studies will complete Mutual Family Assessment training | Statewide Implementation | VDSS will develop a curriculum that provides instruction related to thorough assessment of the competencies of foster families, to be delivered by CRAFFT within each region |
| C. Improve rates of retention of Family Services Specialists by acknowledging their work and supporting them | i. Virginia's Kids Belong in partnership with VDSS will develop Regional partnership designed to acknowledge the work of Family Services Specialists in each region | | January 2021 | Virginia's Kids Belong will hold quarterly events to celebrate the work of Family Services Specialists within each region | Virginia's Kids Belong will develop partnerships between Business, Non Profit and Faith Based organizations within each region | Resource Family unit will meet monthly with Virginia's Kids Belong staff to develop plans to acknowledge the work of Family Services Specialists in each region |

